

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0530**

HENRY A. WAXMAN  
30TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

May 11, 2010

Administrator J. Randolph Babbitt  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20591-0004

Dear Administrator Babbitt:

I am writing to you to express strong concern regarding changes to the flight path for airplanes departing from the Santa Monica Airport (SMO) and the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) failure to conduct public outreach and consultation concerning these changes.

As you know, SMO is a uniquely situated airport directly abutting densely populated neighborhoods, with homes as close as 250 feet from the runway. The airport is also located in very close proximity to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and their primary departure flight paths begin to converge and conflict just offshore.

To ensure safety, pilots departing from SMO are directed to turn at the shoreline by 270 degrees to avoid conflict with planes departing from LAX. In December 2009, the FAA began to test a proposed change to procedures for piston-powered Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) departures from SMO. Such departures from SMO now head 250 degrees to the right just southwest of the airport. As a result, loud piston-powered planes are now flying at low altitudes over densely populated neighborhoods. I have received numerous complaints from my constituents who have recorded a significant increase in the number of piston-engine flights close to their homes at frequent intervals. Many constituents have also expressed concern that the FAA Regional Office in Los Angeles has been unresponsive to their complaints.

A test with such far-reaching impacts requires adequate public education and outreach. Yet, the FAA did not make a presentation to the Santa Monica Airport Commission or to communities living in the vicinity of the airport before the test was initiated. Furthermore, despite a request from the City of Santa Monica, no public outreach program was conducted once the test commenced.

The lack of public outreach as these decisions are made is unacceptable. I urge the FAA to immediately suspend the test, reevaluate its proposals for piston-engine IFR departures from SMO, and initiate a public process for all flight path changes involving the airport. I would appreciate a response to this letter as soon as possible.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,



HENRY A. WAXMAN  
Member of Congress